

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the Application:

1. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] A composition comprising a blend of first and second esters, the first ester comprising a reaction product of first reactants comprising trimer acid derived from tall oil fatty acids or reactive equivalent thereof, first polyhydric alcohol or reactive equivalent thereof, and first monohydric alcohol or reactive equivalent thereof; the first monohydric alcohol being selected from the group of C.sub.8-18 monohydric alcohols or reactive equivalents thereof; the second ester comprising a reaction product of second reactants comprising trimer acid derived from tall oil fatty acids or reactive equivalent thereof, second polyhydric alcohol or reactive equivalent thereof, and second monohydric alcohol or reactive equivalent thereof; the second monohydric alcohol being selected from the group of C.sub.6-10 monohydric alcohols or reactive equivalents thereof; the first and second monohydric alcohols being non-identical;

wherein the first reactants are heated to a temperature of about 200°C to about 250°C and maintained at that temperature from about 5 hours to 13 hours under vacuum as required to maintain reflux, wherein thereafter the resulting first reaction mixture is optionally subjected to a vacuum of about 20-200 mm for removal of volatile materials, and wherein thereafter the temperature of the resulting first reaction mixture is lowered to about 130°C, and

wherein the second reactants are heated to a temperature of about 200°C to about 250°C and maintained at that temperature from about 5 hours to 13 hours under vacuum as required to maintain reflux, wherein thereafter the resulting second reaction mixture is optionally subjected to vacuum of about 20-200 mm for removal of volatile materials, and wherein thereafter the temperature of the resulting second reaction mixture is lowered to about 130°C,

wherein further polypropylene increases about 5 wt.% or less through absorption of the composition following exposure of the polypropylene and the composition at a temperature of about 80°C for a period of up to four weeks.

2. [ORIGINAL] The composition of claim 1 wherein the first reactants and the second reactants each further comprise dimer acid.

3. [ORIGINAL] The composition of claim 2 wherein the first reactants and the second reactants each comprise dimer acid and trimer acid, in a dimer acid:trimer acid weight ratio of 20:80 to 80:20, the weight ratio independently selected in each of the first and second reactants.

4. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of any of claims ~~1-3~~ 1, 2 or 3 wherein the trimer acid is hydrogenated trimer acid.

5. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of any of claims ~~1-4~~ 1, 2, 3 or 4 wherein the first monohydric alcohol is selected from C.sub.10-14 primary monohydric alcohols.

6. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of any of claims ~~1-5~~ 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 wherein the first monohydric alcohol is iso-tridecyl alcohol.

7. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of any of claims ~~1-6~~ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 wherein the first and second polyhydric alcohols are each selected from C.sub.3-15 polyhydric alcohols.

8. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of any of claims ~~1-6~~ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 wherein the first and second polyhydric alcohols are each independently selected from pentaerythritol, di-pentaerythritol, tri-pentaerythritol, trimethylolpropane, ethylene glycol and neopentyl glycol.

9. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of any of claims ~~1-6~~ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 wherein the first and second polyhydric alcohols are each neopentyl glycol.

10. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of any of claims ~~1-6~~ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 wherein the second monohydric alcohol is selected from 2-ethylhexanol, 2-octanol and cyclohexyl alcohol.

11. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of any of claims ~~1-6~~ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 wherein the second monohydric alcohol is 2-ethylhexanol.

12. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of any of claims ~~1-11~~ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 or 11 wherein the first ester has a greater viscosity than the second ester.

13. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of any of claims ~~1-12~~ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12 having a viscosity of 30-50 cSt at 100.degree. C.

14. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of any of claims ~~1-13~~ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 or 13 having a viscosity of about 40 cSt at 100.degree. C.

15. [ORIGINAL] The composition of claim 1 wherein the first monohydric alcohol is selected from the group of C.sub.10-15 primary monohydric alcohols; the second monohydric alcohol is selected from the group consisting of C.sub.8 monohydric alcohols; the first and second polyhydric alcohols are selected from C.sub.3-15 polyhydric alcohols, and the viscosity of the composition is in the range of 30-50 cSt at 100.degree. C.

16. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] A method for preparing an ester composition having a viscosity in the range of 30-50 cSt at 100.degree. C., the method comprising the steps of: a) preparing a first ester, the first ester comprising a reaction product of first reactants comprising trimer acid derived from tall oil fatty acids, first polyhydric alcohol and first monohydric alcohol; the first monohydric alcohol selected from the group of C.sub.8-18 monohydric alcohols; b) preparing a second ester, the second ester comprising a reaction product of second reactants comprising trimer acid derived from tall oil fatty acids, second polyhydric alcohol and second monohydric alcohol; the second monohydric alcohol selected from the group of C.sub.6-10 monohydric alcohols; and c) blending the first and second esters together in a proportion to provide an ester composition having a viscosity in the range of 30-50 cSt at 100.degree. C.; with the proviso that the first and second monohydric alcohols are non-identical;

wherein the first reactants are heated to a temperature of about 200°C to about 250°C and maintained at that temperature from about 5 hours to 13 hours under vacuum as required to maintain reflux, wherein thereafter the resulting first reaction mixture is optionally subjected to a vacuum of about 20-200 mm for removal of volatile materials, and wherein thereafter the temperature of the resulting first reaction mixture is lowered to about 130°C, and

wherein the second reactants are heated to a temperature of about 200°C to about 250°C and maintained at that temperature from about 5 hours to 13 hours under vacuum as required to maintain reflux, wherein thereafter the resulting second reaction mixture is optionally subjected to vacuum of about 20-200 mm for removal of volatile materials, and wherein thereafter the temperature of the resulting second reaction mixture is lowered to about 130°C,

wherein further polypropylene increases about 5 wt.% or less through absorption of the composition following exposure of the polypropylene and the composition at a temperature of about 80°C for a period of up to four weeks.

17. [ORIGINAL] The method of claim 16 wherein the first reactants and the second reactants each further comprise dimer acid, in a dimer acid:trimer acid weight ratio of 20:80 to 80:20, the weight ratio independently selected in each of the first and second reactants.

18. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The method of any of claims ~~16-17~~ 16 or 17 wherein the trimer acid is hydrogenated trimer acid.

19. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The method of any of claims ~~16-18~~ 16, 17 or 18 wherein the first monohydric alcohol is selected from C.sub.10-14 primary monohydric alcohols.

20. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The method of any of claims ~~16-19~~ 16, 17, 18 or 19 wherein the first and second polyhydric alcohols are each selected from C.sub.3-15 polyhydric alcohols.

21. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The method of any of claims ~~16-20~~ 16, 17, 18, 19 or 20 wherein the second monohydric alcohol is selected from 2-ethylhexanol, 2-octanol and cyclohexyl alcohol.

22. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The method of any of claims ~~16-21~~ 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 or 21 wherein the first ester has a greater viscosity than the second ester.

23. [ORIGINAL] The method of claim 16 wherein the first monohydric alcohol is selected from the group of C.sub.10-15 primary monohydric alcohols; the second monohydric alcohol is selected from the group consisting of C.sub.8 monohydric alcohols; the first and second polyhydric alcohols are selected from C.sub.3-15 polyhydric alcohols; and the first ester has a greater viscosity than the second ester.

24. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] A composition prepared by the method of any of claims ~~16-23~~ 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 or 23.

25. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] A cable-filling composition comprising silica and a blend of first and second esters, the first ester comprising a reaction product of first reactants comprising trimer acid derived from tall oil fatty acids, first polyhydric alcohol and first monohydric alcohol; the first monohydric alcohol selected from the group of C.sub.8-18 monohydric alcohols; the second ester comprising a reaction product of second reactants comprising trimer acid derived from tall oil fatty acids, second polyhydric alcohol and second monohydric alcohol; the second monohydric alcohol selected from the group of C.sub.6-10 monohydric alcohols; the first and second monohydric alcohols being non-identical;

wherein the first reactants are heated to a temperature of about 200°C to about 250°C and maintained at that temperature from about 5 hours to 13 hours under vacuum as required to maintain reflux, wherein thereafter the resulting first reaction mixture is optionally subjected to a vacuum of about 20-200 mm for removal of volatile materials, and wherein thereafter the temperature of the resulting first reaction mixture is lowered to about 130°C, and

wherein the second reactants are heated to a temperature of about 200°C to about 250°C and maintained at that temperature from about 5 hours to 13 hours under vacuum as required to maintain reflux, wherein thereafter the resulting second reaction mixture is optionally subjected to vacuum of about 20-200 mm for removal of volatile materials, and wherein thereafter the temperature of the resulting second reaction mixture is lowered to about 130°C,

wherein further polypropylene increases about 5 wt.% or less through absorption of the composition following exposure of the polypropylene and the composition at a temperature of about 80°C for a period of up to four weeks.

26. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The composition of claim 25 wherein the first monohydric alcohol is selected from the group of C.sub.10-15 primary monohydric alcohols; the second monohydric alcohol is selected from the group consisting of C.sub.8 monohydric alcohols; the first and second polyhydric alcohols are selected from C.sub.3-15 polyhydric alcohols, and the viscosity of the blend is in the range of 30-50 cSt at 100.degree. C.

27. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] A method for insulating the contents of a cable, the method comprising a) preparing a cable-filling composition comprising silica and a blend of first and second esters; the first ester comprising a reaction product of first reactants comprising trimer acid derived from tall oil fatty acids, first polyhydric alcohol and first monohydric alcohol; the first monohydric alcohol selected from the group of C.sub.8-18 monohydric alcohols; the second ester comprising a reaction product of second reactants comprising trimer acid derived from tall oil fatty acids, second polyhydric alcohol and second monohydric alcohol; the second monohydric alcohol selected from the group of C.sub.6-10 monohydric alcohols; the first and second monohydric alcohols being non-identical; b) placing the cable-filling composition of step a) into a fiber optic cable;

wherein the first reactants are heated to a temperature of about 200°C to about 250°C and maintained at that temperature from about 5 hours to 13 hours under vacuum as required to maintain reflux, wherein thereafter the resulting first reaction mixture is optionally subjected to a vacuum of about 20-200 mm for removal of volatile materials, and wherein thereafter the temperature of the resulting first reaction mixture is lowered to about 130°C, and

wherein the second reactants are heated to a temperature of about 200°C to about 250°C and maintained at that temperature from about 5 hours to 13 hours under vacuum as required to maintain reflux, wherein thereafter the resulting second reaction mixture is optionally subjected to vacuum of about 20-200 mm for removal of volatile materials, and wherein thereafter the temperature of the resulting second reaction mixture is lowered to about 130°C,

wherein further polypropylene increases about 5 wt.% or less through absorption of the composition following exposure of the polypropylene and the composition at a temperature of about 80°C for a period of up to four weeks.

28. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The method of claim 27 wherein the cable is a fiber optic cable.

29. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] A cable comprising a cable-filling composition; the cable-filling composition comprising silica and a blend of first and second esters; the first ester comprising a reaction product of first reactants comprising trimer acid derived from tall oil fatty acids, first polyhydric alcohol and first monohydric alcohol; the first monohydric alcohol selected from the group of C.sub.8-18 monohydric alcohols; the second ester comprising a reaction product of second reactants comprising trimer acid derived from tall oil fatty acids, second polyhydric alcohol and second monohydric alcohol; the second monohydric alcohol selected from the group of C.sub.6-10 monohydric alcohols; wherein the first and second monohydric alcohols are non-identical;

wherein the first reactants are heated to a temperature of about 200°C to about 250°C and maintained at that temperature from about 5 hours to 13 hours under vacuum as required to maintain reflux, wherein thereafter the resulting first reaction mixture is optionally subjected to a vacuum of about 20-200 mm for removal of volatile materials, and wherein thereafter the temperature of the resulting first reaction mixture is lowered to about 130°C, and

wherein the second reactants are heated to a temperature of about 200°C to about 250°C and maintained at that temperature from about 5 hours to 13 hours under vacuum as required to maintain reflux, wherein thereafter the resulting second reaction mixture is optionally subjected to vacuum of about 20-200 mm for removal of volatile materials, and wherein thereafter the temperature of the resulting second reaction mixture is lowered to about 130°C,

wherein further polypropylene increases about 5 wt.% or less through absorption of the composition following exposure of the polypropylene and the composition at a temperature of about 80°C for a period of up to four weeks.

30. [CURRENTLY AMENDED] The cable of claim 29 wherein the cable is a fiber optic cable.